(c) whether Government is also aware that organic food is healthy since there is no residue of pesticides and is also better in taste and quality;

(d) if so, whether Government is taking any step to switchover to organic food; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The "National Project on Organic Farming (NPOF)" is under implementation since October, 2004. The scheme includes training of farmers on organic farming, field demonstrations on organic inputs and creation of awareness through seminars, exhibitions, publicity through print and electronic media.

The Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) organizes and supports awareness programmes, seminars etc. in States having potential to grow organic produce for export.

Under National Horticulture Mission, assistance is given to farmers for organic farming, organic certification and setting up vermi-compost units.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) and (e) There is no proposal for complete switchover from conventional to organic farming as it is not possible to sustain present level of agricultural production or increase it without chemical inputs.

Treatment of crop diseases

"2265. SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that crop diseases are being treated by chanting mantras and offering medicinal herbs in 'Havan Kunda' at Palampur Agricultural University;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this experiment has been successful in Brazil; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) to (c) Yes, Sir. In an experiment on Wild Marigold and *Aloe vera* the application of Organic Manure + *Homa Bhasma* and Organic Manure + Himbio (Mixture of local isolates of Trichoderma) gave higher yield as compared to Organic Manure alone.

Supervision of fishing operations by Coast Guard

2266. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is an Empowered Committee on fisheries;

(b) whether it is a fact that this Committee has asked the Coast Guard to supervise the fishing operations of Indian fishermen near Rameshwaram in Tamil Nadu;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.